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## A FEW IDEALS FOR A COUNTRY COLLEGE

Opening Address to Students at the beginning of  
the 110th year, September 23, 1909

By PRESIDENT THOMAS.

MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT  
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# A Few Ideals for a Country College.

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We open the 110th year of Middlebury College at a time of much unfavorable criticism of American colleges as a whole. Twenty years ago there were those who contended that a college education was an impractical and useless luxury, consuming altogether too much time from a young man's life, and unfitting him, in many instances at least, for the work for which nature fitted him and in which the world has need of him. That debate appears to have passed, and the decision has been rendered in favor of the higher education. No one seems to doubt now that education to the age of 20 or 22, and up to the point represented by the baccalaureate degree, is highly advantageous to the youth who are so fortunate as to be able to secure it. The unprecedented growth of American colleges in recent years indicates that the conviction has become wide-spread among all classes that our academic institutions stand for a culture and a training which is eminently practical both to those who receive it and to the nation of which they are citizens. The narrow utilitarians, who contended that education beyond the simple branches is a waste of time have been completely routed.

## **DO THE COLLEGES EDUCATE ?**

The question now is, Do the young men and women who go to college receive there the culture which they are supposed to receive? Do the colleges

do their work? Is it actually education in which they are engaged, or are they merely pleasant residences for young men and women who can not in any honesty be called even incipient scholars, and whose ambitions and interests lie almost exclusively in other subjects and pursuits than those which find mention in the college catalogue?

In other words, it seems to be settled in the public mind that a college education is a good thing; the unsettled point is whether the average college student acquires education, whether his store of knowledge is in such measure increased, and his intellectual powers so quickened and disciplined, that he can exert in the stern trials of life the powers which education develops.

#### CRITICISMS.

President Wilson of Princeton, than whom no keener, wiser, or more truthful man labors in America to-day for the elevation of college life, has declared that the outside interests of the college student have sadly crowded out his scholastic interests. As he puts it, "So far as the colleges go, the side shows have swallowed up the circus, and we in the main tent do not know what is going on. And I do not know," he adds, "that I want to continue under those conditions as ring-master. There are more honest occupations than teaching, if you cannot teach,"—he means, of course, if you can not teach because the minds of your pupils are so engrossed in all manner of non-scholastic interests that they have no capacity left for instruction.

He is by no means alone in extreme dissatisfaction with the college as it exists to-day because of the large

number of extra-curriculum activities which engross the attention of the student. I quote a catalogue of the student enterprises found in most of our larger colleges, as published in a New York paper of last Saturday.

“ Besides the major sports there are university organizations with their travelling schedules for tennis, basket ball, hockey, gymnastics, wrestling, fencing, golf, swimming, gun practice, soccer, and cross-country running; in addition to the central university teams, the various classes often support class crews or teams, particularly the freshmen, who not infrequently have half a dozen class teams to maintain, manage, and finance; again there are organizations for all sorts of dramatic and musical interests; literary and religious organizations, including the various publication activities which embrace types as distinct as the daily paper and the yearly directory, with all sorts of sub-species; professional clubs looking to the future professional career of their members, such as press clubs, law clubs, ministerial clubs, committees for occasional social functions, such as dances and receptions, and miscellaneous organizations innumerable.

“ More completely absorbing and engrossing than all the other organizations combined are the distinctively social clubs or fraternities. These commonly own an expensive plant, whose machinery is as complex as that of a good-sized hotel. But the preoccupation with their material management is quite dwarfed by the way in which their politics absorb the eager interest of their members and captivate the whole thought, interest, ambition, and activity of underclassmen who are hoping, praying, aiming, scheming, contriving to make their

calling and election sure to an eligible club or fraternity. The six weeks around annual club elections have often been to all intents and purposes blotted out of the curriculum calendar for over fifty per cent. of the students. The bulk of the most gifted and serviceable collegians, men of fine character and honorable motives, are in the clutch of a system from which individual extrication is almost impossible."

I need not refer at any length to the antagonistic attitude occupied by many toward the athletic enterprises of our college life. Apart from the criticism of particular games, it is felt in wide circles that contests of physical strength and skill occupy a proportion of the interest and energy of the great body of students altogether out of proportion to the necessities of physical training, which sports are supposed to foster. The chronic croaker, the *laudator temporis acti*, may be disregarded, but the utterances of public men of commanding influence and well earned eminence, the calm and sad pronouncements of journals of the highest quality, merit at least attentive consideration.

The extravagance and luxury prevalent in many institutions are included in the indictment of the American college, and it is pointed out that the degrees of some institutions are coming to be regarded more as badges of social distinction, guarantees of membership in families of wealth, than as tokens of intellectual industry and scholastic attainment.

Student life finds scarcely less criticism than the quality and method of instruction served up by Professors to undergraduates. The practice of choosing and promoting instructors on the basis of original research

is held responsible for the filling of chairs with men who have no genius for teaching, who drone away in tiresome lectures the minutiae of worthless investigations on subjects which were never worth investigating, and it is maintained that the inspiring and life-creating teacher, who communicates manhood, is in peril of becoming an extinct species.

For the past few months a popular magazine has seen fit to open its columns to a shrieking alarmist who maintains that the Universities are banded together in a direful plot to "blast the rock of ages." He has discovered what he terms "the college philosophy,"—which must have cost him some pains—which he finds to be hostile to the Christian faith, to all honorable institutions of society, and to sound moral principles. He arraigns the whole academic world as the foe of religion and morals, and calls on the Church to gird on her weapons of war to protect the virtues the fathers have hardly gained and preserve the world from ruin.

#### THE COLLEGES UNDER FIRE.

These fulminations of Mr. Bolce are well nigh totally empty of truth, as might easily be shown by taking up his specifications seriatim. But they would not have found a publisher, and surely they would not have received such general attention, were it not for a wide-spread feeling that something is the matter with the American college. I do not undertake to declare in what measure there is justification for any of the criticisms I have mentioned. It may be that President Wilson was unduly pessimistic in his remark about the

side-shows and the circus, and it is possible that the writer who catalogued the multiplicity of extra-curriculum student activities did not take into consideration the large numbers among whom those enterprises are distributed. The students who waste money, and who are in college merely for the social prestige thereby afforded, may be more in evidence than their numbers warrant, and perhaps there are more teachers of power in service to-day than editorial writers are aware of.

But when every allowance is made, it remains true that the American college is just now under fire, that its friends and well-wishers, men who are giving their lives in its interest, are more than a little skeptical as to its welfare in all respects. Faculties and committees of Faculties, Boards of Trustees and Overseers, as they now resume their sessions in our hundreds of universities and colleges, will take under thoughtful advisement matters which they judge to be wrong, and will devote their utmost wisdom to the discovery of methods of reform, and some of the most careful of them will advocate measures which are scarcely less than revolutionary. Not in any hostility to student interests, but in utmost sympathy with every healthful impulse of young manhood's life, and with a knowledge of the needs of youth more intimate, more kindly sane, than ever has been had before, they will inquire how they can effect radical changes for good in the institutions whose welfare they have at heart. They will act on the conviction that many things have grown up in their colleges which are not helpful, which do not make for student welfare.

**A DISTINCTIVE AIM FOR MIDDLEBURY.**

These facts have a bearing on our attitude toward our own college. The situation in which the prominent colleges find themselves, with friends and foes lamenting their weaknesses and their defects, should deliver our minds from the notion that our chief occupation should be the discovery of practices in vogue elsewhere, with a view to their adoption here. The institutions are not few which would return exuberant thanks if they could free themselves from some of the encumbrances with which we are not pestered, but which we are in danger of attaching to ourselves through the weak process of imitation.

An imitator always selects the foolish features of the supposed paragon he admires, and clothes himself with the mannerisms, not the merits, of the model before his eye. I have in mind a public speaker of rare powers, very popular with students, of a literary style and method of speech over whose defects his superb intellect manages to triumph. It is notoriously amusing that his young worshippers come away with the grotesque wrinkling of his brow, and leave entirely behind the solidity of its logic and the penetrating accuracy of his analytic. It is no easy matter to learn from others. First and before all a man should learn to stand on his own feet, and a college should do the same.

We do not want to be peculiar for the sake of peculiarity, but if we can find an ideal of an institution, unique and distinctive, with its own type of worth and value, there is nothing in the situation as to the contentment and self-satisfaction of other institutions and their friends to prevent earnest effort to realize that

ideal. The dissatisfaction of our friends elsewhere should encourage our own spirit of independence.

We want here our own college, the college which ought to be in response to the situation in which Middlebury finds herself, like none other East or West, learning from all and cordial to suggestions from every source, but imitating none. We want a Middlebury spirit which can be distinguished from the temper of enthusiasm and ambition which prevails elsewhere, which we would not exchange if we could.

#### **A PLAIN MAN'S COLLEGE.**

I believe there exists a Middlebury ideal in the hearts and minds of the wisest friends of the institution, and that that ideal is a worthy one. I think it is agreed that we want here a college of the simple life, a plain man's college, in which extravagance shall not be popular and students who have to rely largely on their own endeavors, and those who can count only upon moderate sums for the acquirement of education, find not only a cordial welcome, but also such student habits and practices as will not make them feel out of place.

There is no college that does not wish to be democratic. Snobbishness is no part of the furnishing of any college Faculty, nor of the men wishing really to count in any company of students. "A man's a man for a' that" on any campus East or West, as perhaps in no other social environment in the world. I do not know of any place where merit wins more surely, and where that which is worthy of respect is more respected, than in the American college, and I have no distinction

between them in mind when making this statement. I am ready to take up the cudgels for Harvard on that proposition as quickly as for our own college.

My suggestion, therefore, that the ideal of Middlebury should include simple standards of students' living does not mean that we are to exalt ourselves above others in pretensions of democracy, and be snobbish in our anti-snobbishness. It is simply a matter of locality and economic situation. It costs more to live in cities than it does in a country village. It costs less for maintenance in an agricultural community than anywhere else. Middlebury, the town, is greatly advantaged in this respect. To change to an expensive college would be to change the character of the town in which the college is situated and bring into the community an altogether different manner of life. We ought to hail the opportunity of preserving at least one New England college, not inaccessible to the larger centers of population, where life is naturally simple, and persons of moderate tastes find a congenial environment.

This position will not be maintained without intention and effort. As we increase in numbers, and as our facilities improve, the natural tendency will be away from the direction which I have indicated. In the administration of the college I have in mind to resist this temptation to the utmost of my ability. I mean, for example, that I do not wish the cost of table board at Hamlin Commons to go above \$3.00 if we can possibly help it, nor the cost of rooms in our dormitories to be advanced from the present low rate, provided it is proved that they are self-supporting on the present basis. When we have the new building for women I

am anxious that the prices be fixed so as to allow only the most moderate return for the investment.

There may well be a little student thought on this subject. You will hear of customs and advantages—if we may call them advantages—at other colleges, which make our quiet life at Middlebury appear somewhat plain. It may be a palatial fraternity residence, or possibly a dormitory fitted up like a city club. Before you ever covet a gift of that sort for Middlebury, count the cost; count it in dollars and cents, and then estimate the result on the general social life of the institution. We shall lose that which has been our virtue for the past hundred years when we change student customs and student habits of living so that men who are largely dependent on themselves do not find special encouragement at our doors.

There is danger in taking this position lest we come to pride ourselves on our poverty and secure the reputation of being a "cheap John" sort of affair. That were worse than the name of abundant luxury, for it has all of the disagreeableness and none of the graces. A Middlebury College student ought to be a gentleman, or in training for the title at least. He ought to acquire that grace and poise of manner, along with independent self-respect, which enables him to be at home among people of any station or attainment. What we want is the dignity of culture, without very much thought of life's material encumbrances, whether they be many or few.

#### CO-EDUCATION.

Our ideal Middlebury must also be a college which does its full duty by both men and women. The ques-

tion of the education of both in our college is settled, and in my judgment we ought to glory in the position which has been taken, and set ourselves to the work of developing the very best kind of a college which both men and women attend.

There are some special reasons why this subject needs mention just at this time. We have acquired a campus for a site for buildings for women, and before next Commencement I hope you will see the beginning of the first woman's building at Middlebury. There is every reason why girls should be accommodated with buildings of their own, and as a matter of convenience those buildings may include recitation rooms and even laboratory and other facilities exclusively for their use. We welcome this year a woman as a member of our Faculty, whose care will be specially the interests of our women students.

These changes are made entirely in the interest of girls, and not at all in any desire to banish them. They may have a Dean or an entire corps of women Professors, one building or twenty, but that does not make them any the less students of Middlebury College, nor give them any the less right to Middlebury privileges.

The successful working out of the problem of the education of both men and women in the same college and the same location, under the same Corporation and Faculty, and in an eastern institution, will be a triumph of no uncertain value. It has been attempted elsewhere in the East, and sad failures have been made, greatly to the damage of the colleges where they have occurred. Our great eastern colleges, their Presidents,

Corporations, and Faculties, are afraid of the girls. They do not dare give them full place at their table of privileges. If we can work out the problem and achieve success, it will mean more than we realize, and Middlebury will be known to the world as a college which has done what others have been afraid to dare.

I believe we can do it. There is no reason in the necessity of things why it cannot be done. It is true that you students might make it difficult, but instead I ask your co-operation towards this victory in American education, and all you need to do is to remember that you are gentlemen.

#### INTELLECTUAL SERIOUSNESS.

Further as to our ideal for Middlebury, I think we want here an institution where the first interests are unquestionably educational interests. I conceive a college to be a society of scholars and those who have the ambition to become scholars and receive the benefits of scholarly pursuits. I believe a college ought to be a place of intellectual interests, where minds are broadened and faculties trained to a degree impossible among those who have not had the opportunity of continued study under the leadership of trained minds. A college man ought to be a man who knows something about the best things that have been thought and said in our world from the earliest days of civilization to the present. A college student ought to be one who is giving himself by resolute endeavor to the attainment of this knowledge and who puts in his time in college to that end.

I know this conception of a college is disputed.

There are those who maintain that our history, science, and dead languages amount to almost nothing, that a man is sure to forget what he learns in college, whether it be much or little, and that the real benefit is the social training which the student acquires from contact with his fellows and some little business experience which he secures in the conduct of student enterprises. But if we are running schools of etiquette, we are taking a very expensive way to do it, and if the little idea of business which a student gets from college is the main result of his course, we should be able to impart that benefit at much less trouble

I believe this view of the matter has been conceived by those who are seeking to justify the presence in college of men who ought never to have sought admission. It needs only a fair statement to carry conviction to any unprejudiced mind that the college exists for the purpose of developing mental ability and producing a man that can work out a clear judgment as to facts, and the reason for facts being as they are. The difference between success and failure in this world is in no small part in the ability or non-ability to *think*, to see a question on each and every side, and to weigh considerations accurately, and arrive at conclusions wisely. For the making of minds which can work to these results the college exists, and for no other purpose.

According to a writer in a recent New York journal, Middlebury has an opportunity to achieve distinction in this respect. "The best of our colleges," he says, "have much yet to learn as to courses, equipment, and methods, but the one of them which shall first

solve the problem of securing the earnest and intelligent attention to the strictly educational side of college life from all but the hopelessly bad or incapable will have placed itself at the head of the most important educational advance of modern times."

Why not do just that at Middlebury? It may not give us at once quite the glory which the editorial writer predicts, but it will give us glory enough and it will enable us to be honest as to our present calling and avocation. We are supposed to be members of an educational institution. It is commonly thought that we are advancing our knowledge and improving our minds. If that is not the case, we ought to quit the college business. A sub-freshman told me last summer that he thought that the fraternities and the college papers were three-fourths of college, and I let him go without further argument. He is not in the room this morning.

It would be worth more than the Pearsons fund, more than any endowment we are at all likely to receive, if the conviction I have just outlined could get hold of us and have its due influence in our college habits. Nothing would help Middlebury so much as the reputation for hard work, plenty of it, and work *con amore*. I believe we have a fair name in that respect already, but it might be improved. It is a matter for closest Faculty and student co-operation. I admit freely that it is by no means always the fault of the student, or of a class of students, when industry lags and interest falters. But with the freedom of electives which now exists here, no student need have any large proportion of his courses in departments

which do not appeal to him, and, as a matter of fact, no student who was not making a good record has thus far given me the excuse that the work was not such as to be profitable.

#### **A COMMON FALLACY.**

I wish to speak of one common fallacy as to student attainment. We hear not infrequently of men who could attain high rank, or even lead their class, if they wanted to, and sometimes a man stands out as quite distinguished for intellectual ability whose college record does not rank him even mediocre. It is explained that he has no desire to stand well, or to attain such knowledge of his subject as will entitle him to a creditable record.

I believe in the majority of these instances the analysis is decidedly at fault. It is not true that the man could if he wanted to. The fault is that he cannot summon and control his will sufficiently to form the purpose to succeed in what a college is supposed to be doing, and to stick to it. It is just as bad not to be able to want to, as to want to and not be able to do it; in fact, I think it worse. Failure of will, failure of vision to see the real worth of things, is the most stupendous failure into which a man who is supposed to be a man can degenerate. I would rather men would some day say of me that I was not able to succeed as President of Middlebury College, that I didn't have the talent, than have them say that I had the ability but did not have the grit to try, and keep on till I won out. If you can't do a thing, own up that you can't, and don't pretend that you can merely because you have one or two of the minor elements of

success. It is the will, 365 days in the year, that is the hardest thing to get. Almost any man can be clever now and then, but the sound, practical wisdom and the grit to do the right thing every day, even when it is hard, even when you are tired and have the right to be tired, is the most difficult of attainments, and the one, therefore, we should most arouse ourselves to reach.

This fallacy, as I have termed it, is only one of a hundred possible obstacles between the good purposes which you have in mind this morning and their achievement in the future. There are all kinds of ways for a college man to fail, just as there are all sorts of pitfalls in life in general. I cannot foresee for you the form in which the difficulty will arise which will threaten to prevent your success as a college man. The only safe frame of mind is that of fixed and determined resolution that no obstacle whatsoever, financial, social, fraternal, athletic, or any other, or the combination of all, shall prevent that which you ought to be and achieve in your college life. Probably you all have read the story about carrying the message to Garcia. An American soldier at the outbreak of the Cuban war was intrusted with an important mission concerning co-operation between the American and Cuban forces and told to deliver it to the Cuban General, Garcia, who was campaigning against the Spaniards somewhere in the wilds and recesses of that island. He was told to get that message to Garcia. He was not instructed where Garcia was, nor how he could get there. That information was not in hand. There was only one thing about his orders, and that was to get that message to Garcia. He was not to come back and tell why he

couldn't, nor even to give his life in the endeavor to reach the Cuban fighter. It was not his life that was wanted, but the delivery of the message to General Garcia.

There is a particular mission on which each one of you is sent as you undertake this college year. What we shall wish to know of you at its close will not be why you did not accomplish that mission, what obstacles you met, what complication of outside interests, what persuasion you faced which induced you to change your mind to your injury,—all talk of that sort will be out of place, the poor consolation of a defeated spirit. The only question will be, Did you get from the college what the college had to give you, and what you came to the college for? Never mind the obstacles; obstacles are things to annihilate. That is a good definition to put in your dictionary—its spirit is what we need in this opening day.

### PRESENT PROSPECTS.

We begin Middlebury's 110th year with good hope. I have just issued a report to the Alumni and friends of the college, which I shall be glad to have all of you read and send to your friends, which shows a total increase of endowment the past year of over \$140,000. The state appropriation of \$6,000 a year is the equivalent of \$120,000 more. I have been specially proud to report to the Corporation the increase in income from students on tuition account. The net charges to students for tuition the past year were \$5610.10, a gain of \$4530.10. As I set out to make a gain of \$4000, I am greatly pleased. I wish to express my deep apprecia-

tion to the students who made this possible, at what sacrifices I very well know.

I believe that still larger advances are ahead for our College, although I do not dare to prophesy any particular benefit which is to come to us in the immediate future. I have set my hope, however, upon a \$200,000 expansion fund. I call it that because it will allow any one to help us expand in any direction he prefers. There are so many things we need that almost any taste can be satisfied. I certainly hope that this fund will include at least \$50,000 for a gymnasium, and as soon as I dare make an appeal to our Alumni I propose to see what can be done in this direction.

We welcome to-day six new instructors on our staff, an addition of nearly fifty per cent. You will have speedy opportunity to meet them, as we shall have our first recitation at 10:30 this morning and proceed thereafter according to regular schedule. The addition of so many instructors makes possible a number of courses not announced in the catalogue. There will be three courses running throughout the year in the Department of Pedagogy : one in the History of Education, one in Secondary Education, and the third in Supervision. Mr. Swett will conduct a class in Surveying throughout the year, and a special course in Trigonometry this term. Dr. Burrage will offer a course in Beginning Greek, open to all students of the College. Since the plan of the course will be to cover the ground of Preparatory Greek, and enable the student to go on to the second year in the regular Greek courses in College, it should be undertaken only by those who stand ready to devote considerable energy to

it, but to these it may be highly recommended. I wish to call the particular attention of Senior and Junior women to the course in Sociology to be conducted by Miss White, continuing throughout the year.

#### DEAN OF WOMEN.

Miss White comes to us as Dean of Women, not in any sense to restrict the life of Middlebury College women, but as far as may be to enlarge and enrich it, and to make it more worth while to be a Middlebury College woman. She will devote her time and thought to your interests, and I bespeak for her a cordial welcome and hearty co-operation, which I know she will receive. She has come to help us do some thinking and working in the problem and endeavor of the development of the magnificent campus for the Middlebury women of the future, with all just regard for the interests of the College as a whole. She desires to be the friend and helper of every woman in College, and while I shall ask her to guard the good name of the College in not permitting aught that is contrary to the spirit of best American womanhood, I trust you will disabuse your minds at once of any suggestions of petty criticism and over-particular fussiness which may be associated with the title Dean of Women,—all of which does not mean that Miss White will not be called upon to say No to some things to which I was obliged to close my eyes last year because I had so many other things to attend to.

#### NEW PRIZES.

I take great pleasure in announcing that a kind friend has offered a series of prizes for the ensuing three

years, for men in the Department of History, for women in the Department of English. The prizes will be two in number, the first \$40, the second \$20; i. e., first and second prizes of \$40 and \$20 for men in History and the same amounts for women in English. These prizes will be awarded at the close of Junior year; for present Juniors the work of the Junior year only in the departments named will be the basis of award; for present Sophomores the work in Sophomore and Junior years; and for present Freshmen the work from now on until the close of Junior year. The same generous friend contributed \$120 the past summer for books in history, and if you will inspect the Library shelves you will see the result.

#### THE LIBRARY.

I have a few words further as to the Library. At the Commencement meeting the Corporation authorized an appropriation of \$3000 the coming year for Library purposes, about three times as much as recent annual expenditures for that work. Since July 1, Miss Etta M. Clark has served as Librarian, and with this larger appropriation we hope to begin improvements which in the course of a few years will make the Library quite a different institution. Beginning next week the Library will be open evenings, for men only, as heretofore. I hope the Library will be used for legitimate Library purposes *more*, and for certain other purposes *less*. A Library is a place for research, and for the consultation of books which a student does not possess himself. A Librarian is not a police officer, for the protection of books, but an expert adviser in their use. As Miss

Clark understands a college Library, she is there to assist any student at any time in making known the full resources of the Library on any topic which the student has reason to investigate. She will never be too busy to assist any of you in finding what the Library has to offer on the subjects you are studying, and I venture to think that, in a little time at least, even those of you who have spent much time about the shelves will find through her material whose presence you did not suspect, and be saved much trouble in learning the authorities which are most helpful.

She can not do this work if the Library is to be a general study room, and that is what I mean by saying that in certain respects I want the Library to be used *less*. One day last winter I happened at the entrance of the Library when a Freshman girl was showing the building to some friends. She remarked to them—I thought in quite a charming manner—“Here is where we get our lessons between classes.” I wanted to say to her, “My dear, this is not the place to study Algebra, and pursue your Rhetoric and Livy, and we do not want you here when you are engaged in that occupation.” I say to you all now, “You belong in the Library, and we want you there, every minute when you need strictly Library facilities, and we do not want you there when you need only books which you have yourself.”

Perhaps the college has been at fault in not providing a convenient, pleasant room for study between recitations for girls who live at some distance from the College. I think there is space enough in the Woman's Study Room on the fourth floor of the Chapel, but I

admit that it has not been arranged in a manner convenient for the purpose. It is not so arranged now, but I want you girls to get together at once to help Miss White to equip that room conveniently and attractively for that purpose. There ought to be sufficient study tables and chairs for all who need to use the room, and I do not see why we can not have also a small book case, with lexicons and reference books, and probably you can suggest a number of other things which I would not be able to think of. I will agree to furnish the means, if you will do the planning and the work. The ultimate benefit in the Library for every student will abundantly compensate for any little sacrifices for the next few weeks.

I may say to the new students that the vow of silence which prevailed in the monastic universities of the Middle Ages has been in force in our Library for many years, and it is regarded as a Middlebury custom to which all are bound to subscribe.

#### **ADVANCE CREDITS.**

If any incoming students find that they have covered already the ground of courses for which they are registered, and do not really need them again, they should apply to the Registrar for examinations for advance credits. I do not want any of you to say a year hence that you did not need the work we prescribed for you. We will be glad to provide other work, and if you can meet the requirements for a degree in three years, we shall be pleased to give it to you.

**THE COMING YEAR.**

I feel very confident that we are opening the best year Middlebury ever had. The College never offered to her students so much as she is offering you to-day. She was never so well organized for effective prosecution of her activities. Her Professors were never more determined to render the utmost that is in them for your good and for the improvement of our College. We had never so many friends outside, never so many who are watching what we do. I repeat the request of a year ago, which I thought you observed with generous fidelity, that you leave me free to do what I want to do for the College, for your sake, and not force me to occupy my time with annoying matters of discipline. Avoid the paint pot, and don't play with fire. Respect the good order of the village. Its citizens contributed several thousand dollars recently to help you, and I want to cultivate their generosity some time again. We have to-day the largest number of students ever enrolled at the beginning of a Middlebury year, the largest Freshman class, the largest number both of men and women ever entering at one time, and, if I mistake not, the largest amount of grit and endurance, the most steadfast resolution, and the strongest faith in God, to make our Middlebury the best college for *us* that ever set itself to the building of American manhood.







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